

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SHOULD THE U.S. POLICY TOWARDS IRAN CHANGE?

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## ABSTRACT

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The United States (U.S.) has not evolved its foreign policy with Iran since President Bush outlined that Tehran was one of the Axis of evil in January, 2002. The Bush administration is currently working through the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to engage with Iran to broker a strategy that deters Iran from building nuclear weapons. Even though the U.S. is communicating with the EU their governments believe that without direct U.S. involvement they will not have enough credibility to force the Iranian clerics to halt their nuclear weapons program. History has shown that Iran is not willing to make any concessions without the U.S. offering significant incentives or without a credible threat by the Europeans to impose tough multilateral economic sanctions should negotiations fail. The U.S. cannot solely rely on European diplomacy; it will require U.S. leadership, in partnership with the international community to ensure appropriate respect for the diplomatic teams when they negotiate with Iran. The Bush administration will need to develop a multinational approach to negotiations and establish direct diplomatic relations with Iran to insure the stability of the Middle East.



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## PREFACE

The United States foreign policy with Iran has primarily consisted of attempts to isolate the country from the global community. Even though the Bush administration has stated that it wants to reestablish communications with Iran it will not support any negotiations that lend credibility to the current theocratic government. To date the clerics have failed to support any initiatives that would allow communications to begin. The Bush administration has encouraged the European Community to continue their non-proliferation negotiations with Iran. The EU believes that the only way for negotiations with Iran to be successful is for the U.S. to become involved. Recently the Iranian government has acknowledged that it wants to open communications with the U.S. Even though it may take several months to develop the ground rules for the negotiations to commence, the Administration should make the most of this opportunity for both countries to begin communicating directly with each other.





## SHOULD THE U.S. POLICY TOWARDS IRAN CHANGE

### ISSUE

Should the United States (U.S.) consider changing its current policy with Iran?

### DEVELOPING IRANIAN POLICY

The Bush administration must develop their Iranian policy to meet the National Security objectives in the Middle East Region. The objectives in the NSS state that the U.S. will: "champion aspirations for human dignity, strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and to work to prevent attacks against us and our allies, work with others to diffuse regional conflicts, prevent enemies from threatening us, our allies and friends, with weapons of mass destruction, ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade, expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy, develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power, and transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty first century."<sup>1</sup>

The Administration needs to provide policy makers with a clear foreign policy in regard to Iran that will allow them to develop effective strategic concepts that meet U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) goals. The goals stated in the NSS are: "political and economic freedom; peaceful relations with other states and respect for human dignity."<sup>2</sup> In developing policy with Iran the U.S. "must overcome three serious obstacles to determine if the Iranian policy meets the NSS goals. The obstacles include: Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; its support for and involvement in international terrorism; and, its support for violent opposition to the Middle East peace process."<sup>3</sup>

### BACKGROUND

Many Iranians consider the U.S. involvement in the 1953 coup that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq as the beginning of Iran's distrust of American policy makers, as the Eisenhower Administration, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) "did help overthrow Mosaddeq and it was culpable in the establishment of the despotism of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi"<sup>4</sup> coming back into power. The clerics have continually used this event to fuel the Iranian attitude of mistrust toward the U.S. From the Iranian revolution in 1979 through the mid 1990's the U.S. policy towards Iran included imposing unilateral "economic sanctions,

incentives, diplomacy, and military force.”<sup>5</sup> From the mid 1990’s through 2003 the U.S. used the Clinton administration’s policy of dual containment for Iran and Iraq. In the late 1990’s the Clinton administration attempted to engage Iran but never achieved any breakthroughs. Immediately after the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 the Bush administration did engage with the Iranian government. Tehran provided assistance to the U.S. during Operation Enduring Freedom, primarily along the Afghanistan and Iranian borders. The opportunity for the U.S. to expand on this engagement policy ended when President Bush announced during his first State of the Union address in January 2002, that Iran was a member of the axis of evil. This statement caused the Iran government to stop engaging with the U.S. and the Bush administration returned to the dual containment policy.

With the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, the Bush administration updated the dual containment policy for both Iraq and Iran by indicating that they wanted to engage with Iran again. This policy change occurred in October 2003 when “the Bush administration assured Iran that the U.S. did not favor a regime change in Tehran and signaled a new willingness to engage in a dialogue with Iran over its nuclear weapons program, alleged support of terrorism, violent opposition to the Middle East peace process and the Iranian government’s poor human rights record.”<sup>6</sup>

Currently the U.S. foreign policy toward Iran has the administration focusing its attention on two specific issues. The first is to stop their pursuit of nuclear weapons and the second is to create an atmosphere that will accelerate a regime change. Even though these two issues have been in the forefront of President Bush’s talks with the European and Russian heads of state, the Administration is still addressing Iran’s pursuit of state sponsored terrorism, opposition to Middle East Peace Process and the their poor human rights record. Even though the Administration has not reestablished direct communications with Iran, it is channeling its efforts through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and supporting the United Kingdom (UK), France and Germany, who are the leading representatives of the European Union (EU) efforts to convince Iran to halt their efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Other than this current initiative the Bush administration has not clearly defined a specific Iranian policy although he has stated that “America’s actions will result in the spread of democracy in the broader Middle East – an important step that will provide an alternative to terror and violence. To promote peace in the Middle East, the President believes we must continue to confront those who are still harboring terrorists.”<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. has no guarantee that Iran will cease their pursuit of nuclear weapons upon the removal of the clerics. “The Central Intelligence Agency has suggested that Iranian interest in

nuclear capability spans from reformers to hard-liners, casting doubt that regime change, even if desirable for other reasons, would solve the nuclear problem.”<sup>8</sup>

The Bush administration’s foreign policy advisors fall into one of three groups on how to approach Iran. The first group wants to establish direct communications with Iran and immediately establish diplomatic ties. The basic tenet for this approach has the U.S. lifting all sanctions to allow the Iranian population to be exposed to the global economy. They believe that the U.S. and Iran can agree on what issues will need to be negotiated. This is a long term approach to regime change that calls for exposing the Iranian society to the global community which these advisors feel will force the current government to evolve into a representative style of government. The second group wants to continue sanctions as they see an Iranian clerical regime that is ready to crumble and feel that continued economic pressure will hasten its demise. The third group “wants to force a regime change in Iran, just as they did in Iraq”<sup>9</sup> for they see the clerics quickly developing a nuclear weapon that could destabilize the region and become a potential deterrent for any initiative the U.S. may attempt with Iran.

The U.S. Iranian policy is at a crossroad at this time. It can continue down the current path that deals with isolated issues one at a time or it can mature into a long term strategy that will provide us with better insight into the current political, economic and social atmosphere in which the Iranian government operates.

#### CURRENT POLICY ASSESSMENT

Since 1979 the U.S. has not had diplomatic relations with Iran’s government and with the departure of the state department personnel following the closing of the embassy in Tehran, the U.S. has not had a physical presence in country. Additionally the U.S. has lost opportunities to gather current information on the Iran’s economic developments by commercial companies doing business in Iran with the signing of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of 1996. The ILSA prevents American companies from directly conducting business or financial transactions with Iran. The lack of a physical U.S. presence in Iran “drastically impedes its understanding of Iran’s domestic, as well as the regional, dynamics.”<sup>10</sup> Additionally without credible human intelligence the Administration cannot ensure if their policies have been effective. Even though President Bush, in October of 2003, announced that the United States policy towards Iran would be one of engagement the White House did not define how this policy would be implemented. The issues are further complicated by “deep divisions within the Bush administration that are hampering U.S. efforts to defuse the growing nuclear weapons threat imposed by Iran”.<sup>11</sup> These divisions over policy have prevented the state department from developing a clear

strategy which has led to the U.S. "failure to convince the Europeans or Russia to implement effective sanctions to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program as the Europeans and Russians have lucrative trade with Iran."<sup>12</sup> If the world community continues to allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons it has the potential to destabilize the entire region.

The U.S., Russia and the EU have not developed complementary strategies to effectively deal with the Iranian nuclear weapons program. The U.S. needs to establish dialog with Russia to monitor their enforcement of the nuclear fuel agreement with Iran that states "Russia will provide nuclear fuel to Iran, and then take back the spent fuel, a step meant to ensure it cannot be diverted into a weapons program".<sup>13</sup> Without continued Russian monitoring the Iranian government may retain spent fuel to make nuclear weapons. Currently the Bush administration is utilizing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to enter into dialog with Iran and the EU on the Iranian's nuclear weapons programs. To ensure the IAEA can influence Iran to cooperate, the Iranian government will need to understand that the United States fully supports this initiative. "Whatever incentives Iran is offered, it must also be shown that there's a limit to the world's patience on this critical issue. And Iran must be sent the same resounding message from the rest of the world: The price of continuing their nuclear efforts will be steep."<sup>14</sup> The Iranian's have accelerated their pursuit of nuclear weapons, as they now feel threatened with U.S. military forces operating on two of its borders and the nuclear weapons capability of Israel.

The current Administration has based its Iranian policy of containment on use of unilateral sanctions to affect a regime change. By creating conditions that will cause a regime change the Administration anticipates that the new government will discontinue its pursuit of Nuclear Weapons, stop sponsoring international terrorist, support the Middle East Peace Process and internally, promote human rights. Since this approach may take several years to affect a regime change the U.S. has sought out the EU and IAEA in an effort to stop Iran's accelerated pursuit of nuclear weapons. To date though, the Bush Administration has only lent the EU marginal support for their nuclear weapons negotiations with Iran.

Secretary of State Rice boiled down the current U.S. policy with Iran as "the U.S. will take no action that extends legitimacy to the ayatollahs in Iran,"<sup>15</sup> which echoed President Bush's inauguration day speech in which he was speaking to the people of Iran and not to the current regime stated, "it is the policy of the U.S. to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world,"<sup>16</sup> which supports Iran's democratic reformers. These statements have not provided the State Department with much leeway on how to develop a strategy that allows them

to engage with the Iranian government. The international community has seen a U.S. administration that is divided on which policy it will follow in dealing with Iran.

This current policy does not bring to bear any additional issues that might be of common interest to both Iran and U.S. Typically the only issues discussed are the confrontational ones and the negotiations never get started. If the U.S. changed the current policy that allowed U.S. officials to directly communicate with Iran it could allow the State Department to reestablish a Consulate in Iran. This would allow the U.S. to establish a human intelligence network that would receive information on the current political and economic climate that the Iranian government is operating in. Additionally a more clearly defined engagement policy would allow other national elements of power to participate in developing deeper relationships with Iran, such as economic relationships. Commercial industries can expand throughout Iran and provide additional sources of information for the U.S. with continuous insight during Iran's evolutionary political development. For this policy to become effective the EU and U.S. must combine their efforts on an Iranian policy, Iran would most likely back down since anytime Iran has been faced with a united front from the international economic and political powers it has made major concessions.<sup>17</sup>

The current policy has few advantages. The Bush administration has encouraged the EU to establish negotiations with Iran which has provided an opportunity for discussion to take place. The likelihood of the U.S. and Iran opening communication is very low due to the distrust built up over the last twenty-five years. Additionally Iran has allowed the IAEA access into the country because the Bush administration has not been directly involved. By allowing the IAEA to build a case, it may gain international support to take the case of Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons forward to the UN Security Council in an effort to convince them to impose economic sanctions on Iran.

There are numerous disadvantages with the current policy. The Bush administration has not fully supported the EU and IAEA efforts which have allowed Iran to stall negotiations with the EU and IAEA on several occasions. Iran sees that the EU and U.S. are divided in their attempts to convince the clerics to cease pursuit of nuclear weapons. Without having to face a combined EU and U.S. effort Iran does not feel threatened and gains additional time to build a nuclear weapon. Iran has been able to weather U.S. unilateral sanctions and the clerics have negated all of the reform movement's advantages and is now firmly in control of the government. To date the U.S. has not been able to gain international support to enforce sanctions on Iran. This effort does not allow U.S. to gather first hand information on Iranian society. The primary disadvantage with the current policy is that it may not stop Iran's pursuit of

nuclear weapon in time before it is developed. Without becoming directly involved the U.S. risks providing the EU with sufficient credibility to keep Iran at the bargaining table and force the clerics to stop their pursuit of nuclear weapons. If Iran becomes the second nation in the Middle East with nuclear capability it has the potential to destabilize the region and provide an opportunity for terrorists to gain possession of nuclear weapons.

#### IRANIAN POLICY WITH THE U.S.

Iran's foreign policy advisors fall into three different groups. The "engagers, who see American ties as the key to Iran's modernization; isolators, who distrust America and believe Iran is better off going it alone; and provokers-conservatives who believe they would be strengthened by a confrontation with the United States."<sup>18</sup>

#### U.S. POLICIES OPTIONS WITH IRAN

There are several policy options that have been discussed by each presidential administration over the last twenty-five years. In the following paragraphs we will discuss and analyze the following three options; developing a grand bargain, establishing an incremental engagement policy, and military option.

#### GRAND BARGAIN

A grand bargain would be designed to bring all issues forward for both the U.S. and Iran to negotiate. The U.S. would focus on two immediate issues, stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program and foster conditions that will lead to a regime change. The U.S. would then tackle the issues relating to Iran's state sponsored terrorism, violent opposition to the Middle East Peace process and its human rights violations. The Iranians would most likely "request U.S. concessions on Persian Gulf security, unfreezing Iranian assets, and lifting sanctions."<sup>19</sup>

A grand bargain would need to bring both countries to the negotiating table and replace the "long standing non-relationship that has become a series of frustrating exchanges, of missed opportunities and perceived slights, as well as a continuation—and, in some key areas, an intensification—of the same Iranian policies that America wishes to thwart."<sup>20</sup>

To achieve a Grand Bargain both countries would need to overcome twenty-five years of estrangement and be willing to agree on numerous and complex issues that would need tremendous internal political support.<sup>21</sup> In addition both the Bush administration and the conservative clerics face political fallout if they begin to engage with each other. The clerics have built up their support through being anti-American and have at various times come down

hard on political reformists that support opening negotiations with the U.S. The Bush administration has to overcome twenty-five years of unilateral sanctions and military action against Iran and its unwillingness to open up diplomatic relations with Iran until there is a regime change.

With the Bush administration stating that it no longer wants to dialog with the current regime, and the clerics stating they won't begin any talks until the U.S. stops the regime change threat, it does not appear likely that both countries could sit down at the negotiating table and immediately hammer out the terms and conditions of a Grand Bargain at this time. Even though Iran has indicated that it is open to establishing better relations with the U.S., Hassan Rowhani, Iran's national security advisor has stated that neither country is interested in direct talks over the nuclear issue now but that the United States was consulting with the Europeans. Rowhani also said that "The United States does not have the means or the power" to change the Iranian regime.<sup>22</sup>

The primary advantage of a grand bargain is that "it would allow the United States and Iran to sort out their differences in a cooperative framework, rather than a confrontational contest."<sup>23</sup> By laying all the cards on the table it shows the Iranian government that the Administration wants to communicate. The grand bargain also has the potential for the U.S. to gather international support for their efforts. A major disadvantage for a grand bargain is that it assumes the Iranian government will come to the table even though every administration since 1980 has presented Iran with a grand bargain only to see the clerics refuse to negotiate. The risk associated with this option is in the difficulty of convincing selected UN Security Council members, Russia and China, to impose sanctions on Iran. Additionally this effort may take too much time to begin negotiations which will allow Iran to finish their pursuit of nuclear weapons.

#### INCREMENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This policy would begin slowly and continue to build until a potential grand bargain could be reached. While developing this policy the U.S. will need to develop incentives that Iran recognizes and punitive measures that have international support. This incremental engagement policy can begin at any time with the initial focus on building confidence between the two nations so that they can identify those issues on which they can begin a dialog. Agreeing to negotiate all issues and not just the confrontational ones will provide opportunities to continue communicating even when the process gets bogged down over contentious items. A potential benefit of this option would be the opportunity to re-admit U.S. diplomats back into Iran. If permitted back in country these diplomats would provide the administration with valuable



insights on how sanctions have previously worked and provide a clearer understanding of how Iranian society has evolved over the last twenty-five years and if the population is ready to support a regime change.

Ending Iran's nuclear weapons program needs to be the initial focus. By showing this as the top priority and engaging on this topic the U.S. will provide additional credibility to the EU efforts. It will also indicate to the Iranian government that the international community has united their efforts to stop their weapons program. Establishing dialog with Iran at this time will further assist the EU which is also raising issues on Iran's state sponsored terrorism, opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace initiative and their human rights violations which are also U.S. primary issues with Iran. Again this would show Iran that it is facing broad international opposition to its current policies.

For the incremental engagement policy to be fully effective the U.S., the EU and Russia must develop a combined strategy to address Iran's nuclear weapons program. One of the primary messages that the U.S. should convey is that we will request the UN Security Counsel impose economic sanctions if Iran does not allow the IAEA full access to inspect all their nuclear programs and sites. Using the incremental approach will allow the U.S. to enter into a dialog with Iran immediately about their nuclear programs, and not have to negotiate the other issues at the same time, which in the past ground talks to a halt. The U.S. can also begin easing sanctions as one of the carrots to stop Iran's state sponsored terrorism and opposition to the Middle East peace process, which would allow Iran to become more exposed to the global economic and political world. This will eventually lead to creating a more open society for Iran's population to evolve their government into a government that truly represents the people.

The incremental engagement policy allows for the establishment of an international carrot and stick approach, wherein the U.S. engages Iran diplomatically. Participating in the EU's negotiations and openly supporting the IAEA efforts will show Iran that it is facing collective international opposition to their nuclear weapons program. The clerics will be confronted with two choices: (1) Stop pursuit of nuclear weapons and allow for continuous IAEA inspections and be admitted into the global economy, or (2) face severe international economic sanctions that will further cripple their economy. For this option to work Iran must see a united, U.S. and EU effort and Russian resolve that it will fully monitor the return of spent nuclear fuel. The clerics are vulnerable to economic sanctions as a result of their country's growing high unemployment. This option does not require a regime change to immediately address Iran's nuclear weapons program. The advantages of using the incremental engagement approach lies in the ability to immediately address Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and showing the clerics

that they face international resolve if they fail to negotiate in good faith. The one disadvantage is that the U.S. will have to negotiate with the current government leaders and may have to forestall their efforts on forcing a regime change. The risk associated with this option is the difficulty of convincing selected UN Security Council members, Russia and China, to impose sanctions on Iran.

#### MILITARY INTERVENTION

The use of the U.S. military for either destroying Iran's nuclear weapons programs or to make a regime change does not appear to be a current option for the Bush administration. However, the president has not taken this option off the table.

For counter proliferation, there are two potential military options to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons program; they are the use of Israeli or U.S. military assets to conduct a limited strike. Even though Israel has indicated that a preemptive strike on Iranian nuclear weapons facilities is not out of the question should they feel threatened by Iran's nuclear weapons program, they don't have full U.S. support at this time. For the U.S. military to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons program, they will need to have actionable intelligence on all of Iran's nuclear sites. To ensure that the armed forces have targeted all of the critical nuclear weapon production sites, the U.S. will have to invest in additional intelligence gathering and not solely rely on information from displaced Iranians who oppose the current regime. This will take time and with Iran possibly being able to produce a nuclear weapon by the year 2007, the U.S. may not be able to gather enough actionable intelligence to conduct a successful strike prior to the Iranians' completion of their first nuclear weapon.

The military option to conduct a regime change may be the only way to prevent the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon. If the U.S. would undertake a regime change at this time, it would need international support to fully succeed in this effort if the goal was to stop Iran's current regime from developing a nuclear weapon. The EU is attempting to engage with Iran to convince them that it is not in their best interest to produce a nuclear weapon and currently, the EU does not support any options that call for a regime change.

When comparing military options for Iran against Operation Iraqi Freedom, there are significant differences in the challenges the military will face. First, Iran has a far greater population and land mass than Iraq, but a key difference is that the Iranian population has previously rallied around their leaders anytime their country has come under attack. There is a greater likelihood that U.S. forces would encounter a larger insurgency since the majority of the actions would be coming from the internal population and not from outside supporters.

The advantage of the military option would be the opportunity to immediately stop Iran's nuclear weapons program. However, it has major disadvantages for this option in that the U.S. does not have international or UN support for a military option, and it could commit the U.S. to nation building simultaneously in three countries. There are several significant risks for conducting a military option. The Iranians have spread their nuclear facilities around the country, making a decisive blow difficult. Intelligence has not provided the location of all the key Iranian nuclear sites. Iranians would likely rally around the government and set back the ongoing regime change. It would preclude any further diplomacy. The Iranians would likely counter with terrorist activities that would directly impact U.S. efforts in Iraq or attack the continental U.S. Any military action has the potential to destabilize the entire region to the point of even reversing our gains in Iraq as the Muslim followers may all align themselves against Israel and its leading supporter, the U.S. A regime change will not guarantee that the succeeding government will not continue pursuing nuclear weapons.

#### SHOULD THE POLICY CHANGE?

The United States should use a sustained incremental engagement policy as the new strategic concept for dealing with Iran. This strategic concept outlined in the Council for Foreign Relations Blue Ribbon Panel report recommends that Washington approach Iran with a willingness to explore areas of common interest that will sustain incremental engagement while still contesting their nuclear weapons program and its support for international terrorism. The key is to offer more carrots to maintain an open dialog with the Iranian government. One of those carrots could be the development of potential commercial relations with the United States. Developing commercial business relations would provide additional insights into the status of the Iranian economy, their nuclear weapons program and political atmosphere.<sup>24</sup> This policy emphasizes the need for sustained dialog, and will provide the U.S. with a strategic framework to focus all the elements of power. By establishing a long term policy, it will allow our diplomatic corps to develop a combined effort with the EU. It will also allow the U.S. to apply pressure on Russia to ensure that Iran returns spent nuclear fuel back to Russia, which reduces the Iranian government's chances to develop nuclear weapons. This option allows the U.S. to offer some carrots in potential commercial investment from U.S. firms, which in turn begins to provide us with insights into how the Iranian government is operating. It also provides the opportunity to determine if a revolutionary or an evolutionary change of government is right for Iran.

In comparing the sustained incremental engagement policy to the current; grand bargain and the military policy options, this new policy will focus on immediate issues, such as Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. This new policy also uses a long term approach that provides common issues for the both the U.S. and Iranian negotiators to continue communicating over even when they reach stalemate on confrontational issues. Additionally it will give the government better insight into the Iranian domestic environment.

The current policy has not developed a comprehensive strategy that allows all of the elements of power to come to bear. In implementing the current strategy the policy makers must wait on the President to determine the issue and how the U.S. will become involved. This policy does not contain clear guidance for the State Department and other elements of the national power to follow, although it does allow the President to pick the most pressing issue and focus everyone's efforts solely on that problem. The grand bargain does not address Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons in a timely manner. By implementing the incremental engagement policy, the Bush administration can still continue working through the EU, which will help build international support for the U.S. policy. This would also allow the administration to focus the national elements of power in those countries, without being fully distracted with establishing a more comprehensive engagement policy with Iran.

The current and grand bargain policy approaches fail to meet the NSS objective of preventing the development of weapons of mass destruction. This failure stems from the fact that both policy's do not provide timely solutions to immediate confront Iran over its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The military limited strike option potentially meets only one of the NSS objectives the elimination of weapons of mass destruction but fails to address all of the remaining ones.

The risk of not having a strategic policy that allows the State Department or other portions of the nation's elements of power to begin engaging with Iran may cause the U.S. to develop inaccurate assessments on the current Iranian political, nuclear and economic developments. By not having engaged with, or established a presence in Iran, the U.S. must depend on other nations to provide information which will be slanted towards their needs. Without any direct engagement, the Iranian government will continue to see the U.S. as an aggressor in the region, which may cause them to continue supporting terrorist and accelerating the development of their nuclear weapons programs as the only means to confront the U.S. military presence.

By adopting the sustained incremental engagement policy the Bush Administration can develop policy that has common interests for both U.S. and Iran. Without developing a continuous dialog with Iran the U.S. may never realize one of its goals of obtaining regional

stability in the Middle East. We have tried episodic selective engagement, sanctions and isolation with Iran that have not produced the desired results. Past policies have not been able to curb the Iranian government from pursuing nuclear weapons, supporting terrorist organizations or supporting the peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

Finally with Iran accelerating its nuclear weapons program we need a policy that communicates directly with the Iranian government on a continuous basis so that both nations understand each other's position. The sustained incremental engagement policy provides the best opportunity for the U.S. to meet our NSS objectives by immediately addressing Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, and opening communications to discuss ending clerics support for state sponsored terrorism, opposition to the Middle East peace process and their poor human rights record.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 1

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs "Background Note: Iran, August 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/ei/bgn/5314.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 September 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth M Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle the Conflict between Iran and America* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2004) 68-69.

<sup>5</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, "Iran, Time for a New Approach" (Council for Foreign Relations Blue Ribbon Panel report July 2004), available from [http://www.cfr.org/pdf/Iran\\_TF.pdf](http://www.cfr.org/pdf/Iran_TF.pdf); Internet; accessed 6 October 2004, 40.

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